



RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Susie Da Silva, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

October 8, 2021

Dear Family and Faculty,

This week we wrapped up our school-based meetings where district leaders had the opportunity to hear leadership teams from each school share their building goals. As you might expect, across all of our nine schools, there was a common theme- a focus on our students' social emotional wellness, and academic needs, whether that be enrichment or extension. In each meeting, it was very evident how well our principals know their students and staff. The focus and communication of the building goals shared at these meetings exemplified how much care and pride our educators take in their leadership each and every day.

Similarly, it is as important that we continue to tend to the social and emotional needs of our faculty and staff. We acknowledge that RPS, like many communities, is facing "COVID- fatigue" and with it, the level of frustration can be high at times, understandably so. That said, our schools are safe places for students and adults, schools that welcome diversity of thought while always modeling respect and kindness- *even when we disagree*. Like last year, our school district will continue to thrive, even in the most challenging of circumstances, and we do this best when our entire school community (in and out of our buildings) works together.

Thank you for extending your gratitude to our bus drivers this week. While driving through BMES this morning, I observed one of our drivers taking a moment to dance with a young child while he was waiting for his teacher. What a way to start the day! We are so grateful.

As a reminder, we have an extended weekend to recognize Columbus Day. Enjoy.

Warmly,

Susie

Susie Da Silva, Ed. D.

Friday BITS

Board of Education Meeting

Our next Board of Education meeting is Tuesday, October 12. In an effort to provide the most accessible experience for community members, we have shifted our Board of Education meeting format to allow for *video public comment, rather than written comment only*. The directions on how to access the Board of Education meeting to **watch only** or to make your **public comment** are below.

To watch the Board of Education meeting, use the Youtube link below.

YouTube Link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFK7CGQjWPQQO05N2_2zROA

OR

If you would like to participate in Public Comment, use the link below to register.

Registration: https://uso6web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_p9UNGKfKRYSSrpGxzfeoZQ

Once registered you will receive an email to join the BOE meeting as an audience member. When it is your time to speak you will be promoted to address the board for three minutes.

****Be sure to have a working microphone/WebCam on your computer or device.***

****You may register as early as today, however, be sure to access the link from your email on the day of the meeting***

Social Media

I know many of us turn to social media for answers with day-to-day-questions about our schools and programs; and while this can certainly be a useful tool, at times these platforms generate misconceptions or inaccurate information. Both may and have caused undue stress-- we encourage our families to reach out to us directly at any time. We are here to help.

PreK-6 COVID Screening Program

Yesterday, parents of Pre K-6 students received [this letter](#) from Dr. Hannaway and Mr. Crook regarding the launch of RPS' partnership with Project COVID DeteCT, a voluntary weekly COVID screening at schools for students. All PreK-6 parents are encouraged to read the above letter, and determine their interest in their child(ren)'s participation. [The letter](#) details:

- The purpose of the program and the logistics
- How to provide digital consent
- An invitation to an open parent information session on October 13

Once consent forms are signed, RPS will notify the parent community of the start date of the program, likely later this month. To enroll your Pre K-6th grader in the program, please log into your PowerSchool account to sign the consent form and opt your child(ren) into this voluntary program. Once logged in, choose the student who you want to provide consent for. Once you have arrived at the individual student page, scroll down and choose "COVID-19 Test Consent" in the navigation panel on the left hand side of the page.

Health and Safety

This week the CT Department of Public Health and State Department of Education published a significant update to [Addendum 5](#) allowing individuals with no known COVID-19 exposure to return to school with a negative test after there has been no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and other symptoms are improving. RPS maintains the pre-pandemic practice that students who experience vomiting, fever or diarrhea may not return to school until these symptoms have been resolved for 24 hours. This change to [Addendum 5](#) means that if your child is sent home from school with a symptom of COVID-19, they may return to school the very next day with a negative test as long as they have been free of fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours and their other symptoms have improved. RPS is implementing this updated guidance immediately which will result in more days of

in-person instruction for our students.

As a reminder and per the CT DPH, RPS does not accept at home COVID-19 tests.

Bus assignments for elementary students have begun. Students will be provided the letter of the row that they are assigned to sit in, as well as which side of the bus. The purpose of bus assignments is to limit the students who may have to quarantine due to an exposure on the bus. We will be sure to provide reminders and assistance to our youngest learners with remembering their row!

Attendance

As per new legislation from the state of CT, students are allocated two additional unexcused absences per year for mental health days. Please contact your school when your child is absent for this reason.

[Ridgefield Tiger Talk](#): Ridgefield Tiger Talk is back for its third season! In this week's show we talk to Dane Street, Ridgefield High School's Athletic Director about this year's sports COVID protocols; the work being done at Tiger Hollow/Scotts Ridge's Field; a fall sports update; and some future projects that are currently being worked on. Thanks for listening!

Curriculum and Instruction

On Thursday morning, the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Education met for the first time this year. Click [here](#) to view the meeting. The agenda included an introduction of the curriculum department staff and their roles; examples of strategies in place to address learning loss; and an overview of professional learning for the year.

Last week the curriculum team presented a review of the assessment results from the state tests administered in the spring of '21. Click [here](#) to see the results with students meeting and exceeding standards combined; and click [here](#) to see them [separated](#). Parents who had students in grades 3-8 and 11 last year at RPS will have received scores in the mail.

Food Service

One of the most important challenges any school food service organization faces daily is food allergies and keeping all students safe in our cafeterias. The entire Chartwells team takes food allergies very seriously and provides daily meal options for students with allergies. Attached [here](#) is a document to help parents and students familiarize themselves with the “Nutrislice” App which includes an allergen tool. Using the Nutrislice App parents can check to see what allergens are in what daily menu items. Ridgefield is a Nut Free District and is striving to be Sesame Free. Sesame will join the top eight allergens as of 2023. Chartwells has begun preparing foods like hummus in-house without sesame paste (Tahini) as well as purchasing wheat and white bread that are made separately from all other baked goods to ensure these breads are sesame free. The Nutrislice app is available online through your smartphone app store. Download it today and search for your menus or find them on the web at:

<https://ridgefield.nutrislice.com> For more information on allergens, please see the overview fact sheet attached [here](#).

RPS News found [here!](#)

Follow us here:

Twitter: @RPS_DaSilva

Instagram: rpssuper

Quote of the Week

“Never say ‘but’ after saying something good.” *Dan Rockwell*

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